

**Common Issues Regarding
the
Notice of Funding Availability
"FY 2005 Real Choice Systems Change Grants"
Offered By The:
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
CFDA 93.779**

**Continuation of Questions Posed by Potential Applicants
June 7, 2005**

74. Does CMS anticipate a similar level of funding for Real Choice System Transformation Grants for FY06? Our state would prefer to wait and apply next year, but we do not want to miss an important opportunity if it will not come again. We know you cannot guarantee a future funding level, but would like to know the general outlook.

Currently, neither Congress nor the President have proposed FY 2006 Real Choice Systems Change funding. There is still additional time in the Congressional appropriations process to legislate 2006 funding, but CMS cannot determine or predict the outcome.

75. Can a State agency apply for the Family-to-Family Health Care Information and Education Centers grant?

No, the applicant must be a non-profit organization.

76. On SF424, will the proposed project dates include only the first year or the entire three-year period? And, would estimated federal funding cover the corresponding project start and end dates?

The proposed project dates will include the entire three-year period. The estimated funding will cover the full project dates.

77. Would an agency receiving other federal funds report all estimated federal funds or only CMS project funds?

The agency should report only CMS project funds related to the CMS project.

78. The application encourages collaboration with existing Family-to-Family Health Care Information and Education Centers. How might collaboration occur with a Center in another state, and where are they?

Grantees collaborate by sharing promising practices, challenges, and lessons learned in their work. Programs in neighboring states might also work together in border areas. States with existing programs include: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

79. Are Project and Budget Narratives required for the first project year only or must narratives be submitted for all three proposed years?

Project and Budget Narratives are required for all three years.

80. The application requests mandatory Project Narrative File Filename. Is this a filename given by the applicant or an existing grant file name?

The mandatory Project Narrative file name is the name of the file given by the applicant, when uploading it into Grants.gov. You may also contact Grants.gov at 1-800-518-4726, if you questions regarding the use of the site.

81. We receive existing Federal and State grants. Are these what we list as function or activity on SF424A, Section A 1-4? If not, what?

The Grant Program Function or Activity is Real Choice Systems Change. The Catalog Number is 93.779. This 424A refers to this grant only and not existing Federal or State grants.

82. In the text of the grant, it specifies that the page limit for each of the sections refer to pages being double-spaced (e.g., on page 17, “This section should be no more than 20 double-spaced single-sided pages (documentation material to be located in indexed appendixes). “). This appears to be true for all components other than the project abstract and the section on the strategic plan. However, on Page 50, the RFP states, “The narrative portions of the application must be SINGLE SPACED.” Can you please clarify which sections of the grant should be single-spaced and which double-spaced?

An erratum to the solicitation is required -- “The format for page spacing for each section of the application and for the application as a whole is *single-spaced*, not double-spaced. The page limit numbers remain the same.”

Please note that including more pages, that is the full limit allowed, does not mean a better proposal. CMS wanted to provide flexibility to applicants to provide detailed information in proposal sections that needed it. CMS is assuming that applicants may need more page room in some sections and not as much in other sections. Clarity and accuracy of content are more critical than page volume.

83. Should Attachment 4 be included in the body of the grant under Part 2 or as an attachment?

The *Application Cover Check-Off Cover sheet*, Attachment 4, in the solicitation is to be placed directly after the Application cover sheet.

84. The definition of Current Level of Transformation reform refers to “reform components.” Can you provide further definition of these components?

Reform components refer to processes and procedures that are designed and implemented to commence and/or further system change in the health and human service delivery system. The underlying aspect of the change, that is reform, is to better coordinate, integrate, and rebalance processes and Medicaid long-term supports for individuals with disabilities that are Medicaid-eligible. Most of the changed processes and procedures will fall into the areas addressed by the six goals in the solicitation, which are titled:

- Improved Access to Long-Term Services: Development of One-Stop System
- Increased Choice and Control: Development/Enhancement of Self-Directed Service Delivery System
- Comprehensive Quality Management System
- Transformation of Information Technology to Support Systems Change
- Creation of a System that More Effectively Manages the Funding for Long Term Supports that Promote Community Living Options
- Long Term Supports Coordinated with Affordable and Accessible Housing.

85. In determining the “Level of Transformation, if reform is in the process of occurring (an activity has been initiated but is not yet completed), should this be classified as an area in which reform has “occurred?” Likewise, if a state has instituted a reform for a components, but it is clear that additional reform needs to occur, should the state consider that “reform has occurred” for this component?

If the activity that is occurring has already created a system and/or consumer impact, then the reform activity is to be considered “occurred”. This interpretation is also the case for a State that wants to further reform in areas where change has already occurred and created an impact.

If the activity is in the planning stages and has not been implemented or has been implemented, but for various reasons has not created a system and/or consumer impact (e.g., too recent of an implementation, implementation challenges exist), then the reform activity is to be considered “*not* occurred”.

86. In deciding on the “Level of Transformation, what is the rule-of-thumb in applying the three transformation levels? There may not be an exact fit of state activities to any one of the three transformation levels.

For example, a state has an initiative that serves a limited number of people, but addresses multiple reform components, where should this state be classified? Alternatively, a state has an experienced multiple reform components, but only for one population, where should this state be classified?

Please note that the purpose of selecting a transformation level is to improve upon the panel review and the scoring processes of the RCSC grants. In prior years, the grants in each RCSC category were randomly assigned to panel reviews for scoring. This year, 2005, CMS wanted to improve upon the “playing field”, so that for instance, the “preliminary states” would be competing with other preliminary states and not be competing with the more advanced states. While translating the transformation levels, as defined, to your state’s reform activity is not an exact science, CMS anticipates that the ability to more evenly panel applications will improve the grant review process.

CMS recognizes that applicants will need to use their discretion in determining a state’s level of transformation. In some cases, a state’s level of transformation will not directly translate into one of the three transformation levels.

Some general steps to consider in determining your level of transformation are:

- The information provided in an applicant’s System Assessment will help determine your level of transformation. This information will also be used by CMS and proposal reviewers in determining the accuracy of your decision.
- Determine the number of agencies, populations, and reform components impacted. The number of people impacted is a not an issue, but rather the number of population types impacted is to be measured. ***If there is not an exact fit between two levels, then select the higher of the two levels.***

87. Given the uncertainty around where states might be classified, would CMS consider having a pre-classification process by which a potential applicant could submit a draft section and receive preliminary feedback from CMS?

A pre-classification review process is not an option. The ability of the applicant to accurately document and determine their level of transformation is scored by panel reviewers and a pre-classification process would eliminate the validity to score the applicant’s decision.

88. Please confirm that the 15% that can be used to hire an independent evaluator is separate from the 20% that can be used for technical assistance.

Confirmed.

89. Please confirm that recipients of previous RCSC grants can apply for a System Transformation Grant whose activities will build upon, but does not duplicate, the work described in the previous RCSC grants (see page 48 of the solicitation).

Confirmed. However, since Vermont and Wisconsin received substantial comprehensive reform grants last year, CMS will not accept applications for System Transformation Grants from these states.